

Illinois Report Card Project

Meeting: Steering Committee Meeting

Date: June 1, 2011

Participants: Amy Nowell (CPS), Ann Courter (UIC), Ben Boer (Advance Illinois), Colleen Donovan (BCG), Dan Harris (Ounce of Prevention), Efua Eigbokhan (Advance Illinois), Larry Frank (IEA/NEA), Marin Gjaja (BCG), Max McGee (IMSA/P20 Council), Melissa Mitchell (Fed. Of Community Schools), Nneka Rimmer (BCG), Michelle Russell (BCG), Rich Voltz (IASA), Robin Steans (AI/P20 Council), Shalini Unnikrishnan (BCG), Steve Pearson (Advance Illinois)

Topics of discussion: update on focus group plan; one-pager report card metrics; v0 of report card display; initial view on cost benefit analysis needs

Summary of discussion:

- Update on Joint Education Leadership Council Meeting provided by Max McGee
 - Interest in reporting on achievement gap
 - Some concern about whether possible to include all valuable metrics on 1 page
 - Some concern about framing parents as primary audience; instead believe educators should be primary audience
 - Some concern that for districts struggling significantly (e.g. East St. Louis), should instead focus on social conditions and not items like teacher retention
 - Max made argument that strong leadership can help turnaround schools in struggling neighborhoods
 - Dan Harris believed key message was ISBE needs to collaborate with an array of government programs for schools to get better; shouldn't all fall on ISBE
- Recap of where we are in project
 - Currently in last month of first phase (development) with plan to begin second phase (refinement and validation) in July
- Focus group update
 - Lead team formed to coordinate focus group effort – split by stakeholder group
 - Parents/ community – Kathy Ryg, Deb Strauss, Melissa Mitchell, Sharod Gordon, Efua Eigbokhan
 - Students – Mike Jacoby, Sharod Gordon, Principal contacts
 - Teachers – Larry Frank, Sue Walters, Amy Alsop
 - Principals/ administrators – Max McGee, Mike Jacoby
 - Call to action for committee members to consider how they can aid process given team needs to leverage their expertise and networks
 - Team aligned on design principles
 - Session design – ideal group sizes 5-8; if exceed 10-12, will use breakout groups; sessions to be scheduled for 2 hours on average but can be expanded/ contracted as needed
 - Sequence and timing – scheduled mid-July to end of August with staggered start to begin parent focus groups later
 - Coordination and implementation – will be led by various members of Steering/Advisory committees and other relevant community leaders, not BCG
 - To ensure representative sample of focus groups, lead team segmented IL based on locale (large urban, small urban, suburban, rural) and region (north, central, south)
 - Locations included in locale/geo combinations are preliminary and committee members are encouraged to offer additional input

- Team to aspire to at least 1 focus group per stakeholder group in each locale and geo region combination
- Review major and minor open items regarding report card one-pager metrics
 - Each metric classified in 1 of 3 ways:
 - 1) agreed to metric – did not discuss
 - 2) minor open item – briefly discussed
 - 3) major open item – focus of discussion
 - To drive decision-making, agreed decision would 'pass' if 80% of attending committee members were in agreement. BCG not in voting.
 - College and career readiness
 - Agreement to use '% achieving composite ACT score ≥ 20 ' (rather than subject-specific scores or threshold of 21)
 - Detail report card input: subject-specific breakdown; higher ACT threshold (e.g. % above 26 and/or distribution of IL and school or district ACT scores)
 - HS success metric
 - Preference to include both matriculation into post-secondary education and persistence from Yr 1 to Yr2
 - If include both, could consider stacked bar to differentiate between matriculation and persistence
 - If had to choose 1, could not reach 80% agreement on which
 - Desire to understand whether matriculation, persistence markedly different and recognition that in some districts they likely will be
 - Some concern that persistence is confounded by items beyond academics and beyond a HS's control, but also recognition that there will be no 'perfectly clean' metric
 - Some interest in using persistence *given* it is further beyond a HS's control – less opportunity to 'game' the metric
 - Will conduct cost benefit analysis to understand whether possible to use National Student Clearinghouse's Student Tracker for this data
 - Recommendation to use NSC Student Tracker after having analyzed coverage of High School to College Success Report
 - HS to College Success Report includes first-time, full-time students at public IL universities (2 and 4 yr)
 - This is approximately 30-40% of IL students who attend post-secondary institutions
 - Those excluded are students attending public IL universities part-time, private IL universities, out-of-state universities
 - Should include reference or link to HS to College Success Report on IL report card
 - Will need to be explicit with other key stakeholders why not including metric from HS to College Success Report
 - Detailed report card input: % of HS graduates employed; full spectrum of post-secondary experience (e.g. % of HS graduates accepted to post-secondary institution; % of HS graduates accepted or matriculating in 'highly competitive' post-secondary institutions; view of HS graduate average GPA at post-secondary institutions; % of HS graduates graduating from post-secondary institutions; % of HS graduates graduating from post-secondary institutions with high honors)
 - Next step: team to analyze college matriculation vs. persistence rates using data from several school districts using NSC Student Tracker today (e.g. CPS)

- Middle school/ junior high readiness metrics
 - Agreement to include 2 metrics
 - % of 8th graders meeting/ exceeding and % of 8th graders exceeding state standards on reading and math
 - Addition since last Advisory Committee Meeting after having removed 'promotion' metric
 - % of 8th graders passing Algebra I with grade of C or better
 - Follow-up since last Advisory Committee Meeting: ISBE estimates 75% of middle schools offer Algebra I
 - Belief that the two, together, can be telling; for example, if see high rate of students earning C or better in Algebra I, but poor performance on state tests, begs the question of how strong the math department is
 - Once PARCC assessments released, will need to revisit this metric – if includes Algebra, may only use performance on PARCC assessment
- Elementary school readiness and success metrics
 - Initial recommendation to include 2 readiness metrics, 1 success metric
 - Readiness:
 - % of 5th graders meeting/ exceeding and % exceeding state standards on reading and math
 - % of 3rd graders meeting/ exceeding and % exceeding state standards on reading and math
 - Success
 - % of most recent alumni meeting/ exceeding and % exceeding state standards at next grade level
 - Concern about whether 3 metrics will be meaningful
 - Given ISAT meet/ exceed cut scores different, questioned whether readers would be able to understand results across 3 different views of state test performance (3rd, 5th, 6th/ most recent alumni)
 - Cohort-specific growth as success metric discussed
 - E.g. 4th grade performance on state tests vs. 6th grade performance on state tests at next school
 - However, some concern about how mobility would impact metric
 - Feasibility unclear given IL moving forward with a growth model; response that 'external' view could be helpful comparison to IL's growth model (that may be more at risk of 'gaming')
 - Resolved to keep possibility of an additional growth metric in 'life boat' for future consideration
 - Resolved to collapse readiness and success and report:
 - 1) % of 3rd graders meeting/ exceeding and % exceeding state standards on reading and math
 - Intentionally placing 3rd grade performance first given importance of transition
 - Given most parents likely not aware of importance of 3rd grade transition, suggestion to include star/ flag on the most important metrics
 - Team will investigate approach in future displays
 - Relative metrics – to avoid too many meets/exceeds discussed – not issue any more with shorter list of metrics
 - 2) % of 5th graders (or last grade in school) meeting/ exceeding and % exceeding state standards on reading and math

- Elementary on track metric
 - In long-term, will include results from KIDS (Kindergarten Individual Development Survey), but results likely not available until 2014 (pilot in 2012-2013 school year)
 - In interim, would like to include metric, '% of Kindergarteners who have experienced preschool'
 - Metric presents challenges regarding availability of data on private preschools, varied definitions of pre-school if attempt self-reported parent survey
 - However, recognition that if only focused on publicly-funded preschool, potentially okay given it is lower income students we are most interested in positively impacting with this metric
 - Some concern that schools could use this data to 'not allow' certain students to enroll; meanwhile, others argued this could provide support for a school that has significant progress to 'make up for' given few students experienced preschool
 - Next step: team to investigate 1) whether parents fill out a state form when enrolling students in Kindergarten that could ask about previous preschool enrollment and include several criteria to overcome definition challenge and 2) coverage of Preschool for All Program
- Environment – instructional quality metric (all school levels)
 - Preference for 2 metrics: teacher qualifications and teacher evaluation (e.g. % of teachers in each evaluation bucket per new evaluation)
 - Some concern that teacher qualifications is a static metric (in the past) and does not account for improvements teachers can make via professional development and new evaluations
 - However, given teacher evaluation will not be available in short-term, others believed important to include *some* information regarding teacher quality
 - 2 potential metrics initially proposed for teacher qualifications:
 - Average ACT/ SAT-equivalent score of teachers
 - % of teachers from 'competitive' undergraduate institutions (per Barron's college rankings)
 - Concern that neither teacher qualification metric is perfect
 - ACT score – hurts poor performers on standardized tests
 - Undergrad caliber – while could capture more holistic view of past academic achievements, some concern in focusing on select institutions
 - Question as to whether possible to blend ACT score and undergrad university caliber into a composite teacher qualification score
 - ITAC initially deprioritized given researchers recommended calculation not be used at school-level due to data gaps; however, still interest in determining whether possible to report at school level
 - Next step: Team to contact Brad White IERC to 1) further investigate whether ITAC possible at school level and 2) determine whether possible to create new composite measure using only ACT score and undergrad university caliber
- Environment – teacher attendance (all school levels)
 - Having previously agreed that teacher attendance should be reported on the report card, focused discussion on how to define teacher absence

- Initial recommendation to report based on following definition: if a teacher is not in the classroom for at least 50% of his/her assigned periods/ class time on a given day, s/he is absent
 - Some strong belief that this metric should focus on 'face time' students have with teachers
 - However, concern that teachers could be on 'official business' at a professional development day, but considered absent
 - Response that metric could cause administrators to be 'smarter' about when professional development days scheduled
 - Further, teachers taking advantage of development opportunities *and* taking reasonable number of vacation and sick days could still fall under the '10 absence' threshold if report '% of teachers with fewer than 10 absences'
 - Resolution to instead report: '% of teachers present in class XX% or more of scheduled class time' (exact threshold TBD)
 - Need to clarify how '1/2 time release Presidents' logged in TSR to ensure them missing part of school day for union-related meetings not counted as absence
 - Detailed report input: professional development time
 - Environment – drop out / push out rate (all school levels)
 - Metric proposed in last Advisory Committee Meeting so decision for group was whether to include on one-pager or detailed report
 - Concern that 1) it would be nearly impossible to distinguish between drop out and push out rate and 2) metric would not be telling except for in large city districts (in districts with fewer schools, harder to distinguish between mobility vs. drop-out)
 - Resolved to include on detailed report, but will be 'lifeboat' metric until further testing in focus groups
 - Next step: investigate differences between mobility and drop-out rate across various school district types; test value of metric in focus groups
- Did not discuss climate survey, but requested committee members to share feedback over email / phone
 - Suggestion that rather than recommend survey question topics under each potential composite score (family & community engagement; learning climate; professional climate), develop 'long list' of potential survey question topics and use focus group input (e.g. prioritized view on topics) to build composites
- Introduced v0 of report card display
 - Plan to include 3 data elements
 - Absolute value on metric
 - Comparison data
 - Trend metric
 - For comparison, most interest in peer set and state average
 - Peer set – important to provide relevant comparisons, *but* do not want to breed low expectations
 - 2 approaches focused on:
 - Geographic (e.g. 10 closest schools)
 - Demographic (e.g. combination of 4-5 demographic items)
 - State average – for some peer sets, shows what schools should aspire to
 - Recommendation to include a line on the trend graph regarding state average rather than an additional column of data

- Some continued interest in separate column for state average
 - Argument that on *paper* version of one-pager, we should only have 1 column of comparison for ease of understanding; however, in interactive online version, viewers could toggle between comparison options
 - Suggestion to consider region average (e.g. via regional superintendents)
 - For trend, discussion regarding whether to include 3-5 yrs or go farther back (e.g. 10-15 yrs) to avoid spikiness of data, show whether trending upward/ downward
 - Concerns about whether have data for metric 10-15 yrs back
 - Next steps: construct peer sets based on 2 peer set approaches discussed; investigate historical data availability of each metric (i.e. how many years); test trend display preference with parents in focus groups
- Did not discuss v0 of context page display, but requested feedback by email/ phone
- Did not discuss initial view on cost benefit analysis needs, but requested feedback by email/ phone

Next steps

- **BCG team to incorporate Steering Committee input into report card v0.4 and follow-up on metric-specific questions for discussion at next Steering Committee meeting on June 17**
- **Develop district report card**
- **Conduct check-in with Focus Group Lead Team as needed**
- **Develop draft of focus group facilitation guide and feedback templates**